

1 THE HONORABLE JOHN C. COUGHENOUR  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6

7 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
8 WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON  
9 AT SEATTLE

10 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

11 Plaintiff,

v.

12 OMAR ISRAEL-MORALES,

13 Defendant.

14 CASE NO. CR20-0136-JCC-3

ORDER

15 This matter comes before the Court on Defendant Omar Israel-Morales's unopposed  
16 motion to proceed with a guilty plea hearing by video conference (Dkt. No. 120). Having  
17 thoroughly considered the motion and the relevant record, the Court hereby GRANTS the motion  
18 for the reasons explained herein.

19 **I. BACKGROUND**

20 Mr. Israel-Morales has been charged with conspiring to distribute controlled substances  
21 and possessing fentanyl and methamphetamine with intent to distribute. (Dkt. No. 1 at 1–6.) He  
22 would like to plead guilty and proceed with the plea hearing by video conference. (Dkt. No.  
23 120.)

24 **II. DISCUSSION**

25 Delaying Mr. Israel-Morales's plea hearing would cause serious harm to the interests of  
26 justice. *See* W.D. Wash. General Orders 04-20, 09-20, 14-20, 17-20, 06-21. Under General Order

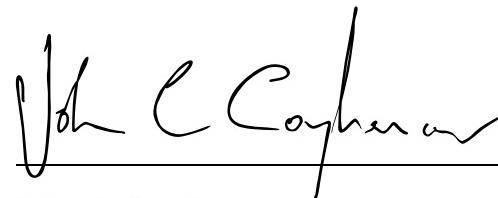
1 04-21, with limited exceptions, in-person hearings will not resume until June 30, 2021. While the  
2 number of in-person proceedings that can be held in the courthouse may begin to increase in  
3 May 2021, even then, the Court will be strictly limiting the number of proceedings that can occur  
4 concurrently and the number of people who can attend those proceedings. *See* W.D. Wash.  
5 General Order 04-21 at 2. Due to rising COVID-19 cases in this District, the Court may need to  
6 extend that timeline further. Delaying Mr. Israel-Morales's plea hearing and, as a consequence,  
7 his sentencing, by at least several weeks would cause serious harm to the interests of justice  
8 because Mr. Israel-Morales has a strong interest in the speedy resolution of this matter now that  
9 he has decided to plead guilty.

10 **III. CONCLUSION**

11 For the foregoing reasons, the Court GRANTS Defendant Omar Israel-Morales's motion  
12 to proceed with a guilty plea by video conference (Dkt. No. 120) and ORDERS that his plea  
13 hearing be scheduled before a Magistrate Judge as soon as practicable and be conducted by video  
14 conference.

15  
16 DATED this 3rd day of May 2021.

17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26



---

John C. Coughenour  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE